

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated February 11, 2004. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 21-51 remain pending in the application and are shown above. Claims 1-20 have been cancelled by Applicants. Reconsideration of the claims is requested for reasons presented herein.

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. § 121:

- I. Claims 1-4 and 6-11, drawn to a method for heating a fluid, classified in class 252, subclass 73.
- II. Claims 5 and 12-20, drawn to a method for transfer a natural gas through a pipeline, classified in class 239, subclass 128.

Applicants provisionally elect group I for prosecution. The non-elected claims have been cancelled.

Specification

Claims 1-4 and 6-11 stand objected to because of informalities cited by the Examiner. Applicants believe claims 21-51 overcome the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4 and 6-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Minks, et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,059,996. The Examiner states that *Minks* discloses a low-viscosity, aqueous coolant brines based on inhibited alkali metal

acetates and/or formates having improved corrosion protection, wherein the coolant brines contain 0.2 to 5% by weight of alkali metal sulfites or pyrosulfites. The Examiner further states that the reference teaches circulating and recirculating the fluid through a heating zone.

Minks discloses a low-viscosity, aqueous coolant brine which contains potassium formate and/or acetate. The coolant has corrosion protection even in aqueous dilution in a frostproofing range. The inhibitors are added to the coolant brine to inhibit corrosion. *Minks* does not disclose heating the coolant so that it can transfer the stored heat to a fluid, thereby heating the fluid, or a heating system. *Minks* does not teach, show, or suggest heating a solution comprising potassium formate in a solution heating zone; circulating the solution to a fluid heating zone to heat the fluid; and recirculating the solution to the solution heating zone, as recited in claim 1 and claims depending therefrom, and new independent claim 40.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution includes at least 0.01% by weight sodium formate, as recited in claim 28.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises 0.01% to 50% by weight of a glycol having up to 6 carbon atoms, as recited in claim 34.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises an effective amount of alkali metal halide to improve freeze resistance of the solution, as recited in claim 35.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises ammonium formate, as recited in claim 36.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises an alkali metal formate other than potassium formate, as recited in claim 37.

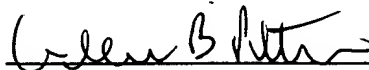
Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises ammonium acetate, as recited in claim 38.

Minks further does not teach, show, or suggest the solution further comprises an alkali metal acetate other than potassium acetate, as recited in claim 39.

Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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